***Press* Release**

The Meteorological Office

PRESS OFFICE

10 September 1999 nr 373

The Met. Office demonstrates new Mediterranean forecast at the Southampton Boat Show

The Met. Office is demonstrating its new five-day weather forecast for the Mediterranean on its stand (A16, Solent Hall) at this year's Southampton Boat Show (10-19 September).

The new service was unveiled in July at this year's Port Fairline Rally, which set off from the port of Cala d'Or in Mallorca. Throughout the rally, Met. Office BBC weather forecaster Peter Cockroft provided skippers of the 45 competing boats with up to the minute weather briefings.

The forecast provides a detailed picture of sea state, wind, temperature, visibility and weather conditions for up to five days ahead. Separate forecasts are available for the five inshore locations of Gibraltar to Malaga, Malaga to Cartagena, Cartagena to Valencia, Valencia to Barcelona and The Balearics.

The new service is available to sailors either via MetFAX, a premium rate fax service accessible only from the UK, or by buying virtual tickets for MetWEB, The Met. Office's internet site. Specialist one-to-one consultation forecasts are also available 24-hours a day via MetCALL Direct, which connects users to a forecaster at The Met. Office in Gibraltar. Customers can also use MetCALL DIRECT to access the fax service from outside the UK.

Peter Hollingsworth, The Met. Office's leisure services manager, says the Mediterranean Forecast fills a burning need among sailing enthusiasts in the region.

"This new service will be welcomed by the motorboat and yachting fraternity, many of whom rely upon The Met. Office's forecast in the UK.

This is the first time that forecasts for this area have been available via the internet and fax with the added option of a one-to-one consultation with an experienced meteorologist.

With a large number of skippers using portable laptop PCs and the wider coverage now available on GSM 'phones, the Mediterranean Forecast provides easy and convenient access to first class weather data."

MetCALL DIRECT gives access to fax services from outside the UK, by calling 08700 767 818 from a fax machine and following the menu instructions. A specialist one-to-one consultation with a forecaster from The Met. Office in Gibraltar is also available on this number. Each consultation costs £15 and payment is by credit card.

MetFAX premium rate calls are charged at £1 per minute at all times. MetWEB can be accessed on the internet at www.met-office.gov.uk. Books of virtual tickets for MetWEB can be purchased by making a single call to the helpline on 08700 750 077 or by e-mail: metweb@meto.gov.uk; minimum purchase £10.

Issued on behalf of The Met. Office by Prowse & Co. Ltd

For media enquiries contact:
The Met. Office Press Office: Andy Yeatman - (+44) 1344 856655
Prowse & Co Ltd: Colin Hallmark - (+44) 1372 363386